



Water Week in Kentucky

Invasive Species

March 2018

What are invasive species?

Invasive species are plants, animals or pathogens that cause ecological or economic harm in a new environment where it is not native. Invasives are most often introduced to new environments by human activities: they can be transported in baitwells and ballast tanks of boats, tangle around boat anchors, be intentionally and/or accidentally released, hitchhike in produce, and many other routes.

In Kentucky we have documented aquatic invasives like Bighead Carp, Zebra Mussels and Hydrilla. They are often very successful at taking over their new environment because they reproduce quickly mature early and have no natural predators.

<https://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/SpeciesList.aspx?Group=&Sortby=1&state=KY>



Bighead carp, zebra mussels, and Hydrilla are all invasive in Kentucky waters

How do invasives affect the environment?

Invasive species can affect the environment and the economy by:

- Displacing and outcompeting native species
- Disrupting the food webs and decreasing native biodiversity
- Damaging infrastructure, water conveyance structures and boats
- Causing taste and odor issues in drinking water

What can you do to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species?

Prevention is the best method against invasive species. Once an invasive has been established in an area, it can be expensive and time-consuming to control the spread and almost impossible to eradicate.

Whether you are an angler, pet store owner or just love being on the water, we can all do our part to help stop the spread of invasive species in Kentucky's lakes and streams by following some simple guidelines:

- **Clean** weeds and debris from your boats, and remove any attached invasives, like zebra mussels.
- **Drain** your boat, livewells, and baitwells, and keep all drain plugs out while traveling.
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash.
- **Dry** docks, lifts, swim rafts and other equipment before placing equipment into another water body.
- **Do not** release pets into the wild or transport fish between bodies of water.